

NEWS

# CANARY WHO NAILED MOB COPS IS DEAD

By Kati Cornell Smith

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This canary will sing no more.

Burton Kaplan, the star turncoat who played a key role in bringing down mob cops Louis Eppolito and Stephen Caracappa, died of prostate cancer earlier this month, sources told The Post.

The 75-year-old stool pigeon, whose daughter is Manhattan Criminal Court Judge Deborah Kaplan, spent the last three years of his life in an undisclosed location after a judge slashed his 27-year prison sentence for drug trafficking to 9 years as a reward for his testimony.

Sources said the family has kept the death secret since July 11 and his daughter declined comment yesterday.

Kaplan took the stand in 2006 to detail a life of crime, in which he acted as Luchese underboss Anthony "Gaspipe" Casso's go-between with the disgraced detectives.

Eppolito and Caracappa were long suspected of carrying out murders and feeding the mob information, but had managed to live above the law until Kaplan agreed to cooperate with the feds.

Relatives of the mob cops' victims have been trying to force Kaplan to testify in connection with their lawsuits against the disgraced detectives and the city.

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